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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
OF NEW YORK

1918





*An Original Comic Opera in Two Acts,
entitled:*

PRINCE ANANIAS

AS PERFORMED BY

"THE BOSTONIANS."

MUSIC BY

VICTOR HERBERT.

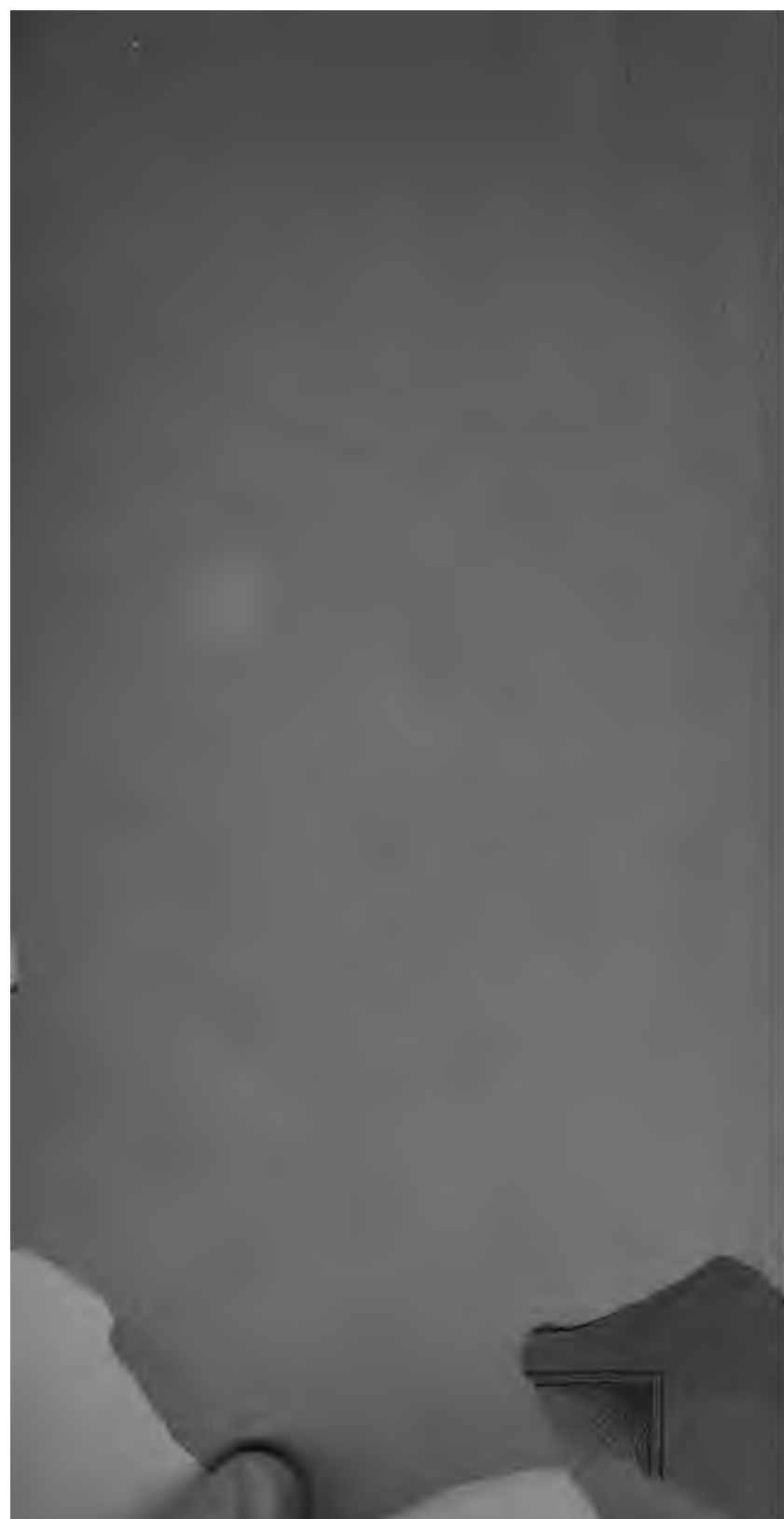
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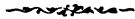


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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918**

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*First Performed at the Broadway Theatre, New York City.
20th November, 1894.*

PRINCE ANANIAS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

BONIFACE, *King of Navarre*,
CERDIC, *Duc d'Angers*,
KILLJOY, *Chamberlain to the King*,
LOUIS BIRON, *A Vagabond Poet and Adventurer*,
GEORGE LE GRABBE, *An Outlaw*,
LA FONTAINE, *Manager of a Band of Strolling Players*,
EUGENE, *An Obscured Dramatist*,
JACQUES, *An Inn-keeper*,
IVON, *A Villager*,
FELICIE, *Countess of Pyrennes, Sister to Killjoy*,
MIRABEL, *Daughter to Killjoy*,
NINETTE, *A Village Belle*,
IDALIA, *La Fontaine's Leading Lady*,

*Lords, Ladies, Players, Halberdiers, Herald, Pages, Pipers,
Villagers, Attendants, etc., etc.*

ACT I. EXTERIOR OF AN INN IN THE PYRENNES.

ACT II. A GLADE NEAR THE KING'S PALACE.

Musical Director, . . . , **Mr. S. L. STUDLEY**

Stage Director, **Mr. JEROME. SYKES**

**Scenery by MR. ERNEST ALBERT. Costumes designed by MRS. SIEDLE
and executed by DAZIAN. Shoes by AZZIMONTI. Wigs by MEYER.
Properties by HENRY. Dances arranged by SIGNOR ROMEO.**

**THE OPERA PRODUCED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
AUTHOR AND COMPOSER.**



PRINCE ANANIAS.

ACT I.

DISCOVERED: VILLAGERS, MEN *drinking at table.*
Others heralding the last of the harvest.

NO. 1a—OPENING CHORUS AND SCENE.

ALL. The glorious robe of autumn spread
O'er hillsides and a thousand dales,
With tints of gold and flaming red,
In brightest glow the earth regales.
The vintage praise with thankful voice—
Hail! mirth and love, let all rejoice.

Enter rustic cart, drawn by PEASANTS, filled with harvest fruits. WOMEN from the fields.

ALL. Hail! Hail! the vine. Hail! Hail! the vine.

MEN. Come sound the pipe,
The dance begin,
Fruit bursting ripe,
The harvest in:
Each lover weaves,
With autumn leaves,
For sweetheart's hair
A garland fair.

Enter JACQUES.

JACQUES. My friends for startling news prepare!
To-morrow weds a maiden fair
To Valentine, the rich and rare—

ALL. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!
To wed is his proclivity

JACQUES. The maiden's name who soon allies
With Valentine will cause surprise;
She's jilted swains of every size—
Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

ALL. We fear some incivility !

JACQUES. It is Ninette !

! WOMEN. The vixen sly—the butterfly !

JACQUES. The village pet !

MEN. So meek and shy !

JACQUES. To Valentine !

WOMEN. The dotard bold—the miser cold !

JACQUES. The old gold mine !

MEN. Her youth has sold !
To-morrow weds Ninette, the fair,

WOMEN. To Valentine, the rich and rare ;

MEN. We did in turn our love declare—

WOMEN. She each one then rejected !

MEN. Oh ! bachelors we will remain,
All sighs and smiles will be in vain—
A married lot we all disdain,
'Gainst love we are protected !

WOMEN. We all believe you'll change your tune,
And as before be importune ;
Ere we shall see another moon
By love you'll be affected !

Enter NINETTE.

No. 1b—RECITATIVE.

NINETTE. What means this congregation ?
What's the news ?
My lack of information
Please excuse.

JACQUES. This smiling deputation
Offers congratulation—

NINETTE. That I wed ?

JACQUES. For we think it very funny
That you marry age and money ;
For it's not all gold and honey.

WOMEN. That is true !

NINETTE. I quail before the goal in view,
For what you state I fear is true !

NO. 10—SONG AND CHORUS—NINETTE.

A dutious wife I soon shall be,
For to-morrow, at the altar,
The priest will give a man to me,
With him to live, with him agree,
And promise make to be his slave—
I almost quake, no power to save.
What shall I do? Oh! dear, dear me,
Now I think I'm goin' to falter !

ALL. Now she thinks she's goin' to falter !
Come, cheer up, do, Ninette, dear friend,
Now fortune doth a husband send ;
We think you'll make a happy pair—
Come, don't upset the whole affair !

NINETTE. A maid is rash, a fool is she,
Once it's done she cannot alter ;
The priest can't give you back the youth,
You once did live, it is the truth ;
Henceforth you weep and mend and bake,
And vigils keep—for mercy's sake
What shall I do? Oh, dear, dear me,
Now I'm sure I'm goin' to falter.

ALL. Now she's sure she's goin' to falter !
Come, cheer up, do, Ninette, dear friend, etc.

(Exeunt all but JACQUES and IVON.)

JACQUES. Well, to think of that confounded old miser setting his eyes on the prettiest girl in the whole world, when he has buried four lovely creatures, makes me feel like strangling every blessed bit of breath out of his tottering old carcass.

IVON. Ah, she's fickle, though.

JACQUES. Of course she is. So would I be, so would you be ; that's her charm. But think of the feast the old fool's ordered.

IVON. Yes, there's some consolation in that. I hope she'll not change her mind. She seems timid. Hullo !

Enter a MUSKETEER. Hangs a bill on portico.

JACQUES. What is it ?

IVON (*reading over MUSKETEER'S shoulder*). "Two hundred louis for the head of George le Grabbe."

JACQUES. Ha, ha, so George has been up to his tricks again, eh ? (*Exit MUSKETEER.*)
Well, the King might as well try to catch a lion with a mouse trap.

IVON. Did you ever see him ?

JACQUES. Bless your heart, no. But I hear he's a mighty jolly fellow.

Enter GEORGE, disguised as a palmer.

He'll entertain any one but a noble, and right royally, too. He's the plague of the court. (*GEORGE starts.*)
Holds the road between France and Navarre, and gets his toll from every courtier who passes through what he terms his domain.

(*Turns, eyes GEORGE, draws IVON'S attention to him, beckons.*)

A palmer ! (*Both bow.*) (*Exeunt JACQUES and IVON.*)

GEORGE. So the King is after my head again ? (*Reads bill.*) Bah ! Fool that I am to be ensnared by love. I'll go no further, and yet I must find her. I will, too, though I have to seek her at the court and risk my head. Ah ! what a turn in fortune's wheel for me.

NO. 2—SONG—GEORGE.

Under an oak, one fine June morn,
Unostentatiously was born
A babe destined for fickle fate
To play with far from lightly.
Now thrived and grew this babe apace,
In stature high, with added grace—
The forest broad for his estate
At manhood bound him tightly.

By law an outlaw termed,
The epithet I've earned,
For all who stray
Through paths my way
Must pay the toll I claim—
Who dares my power disdain ?

The law has not ensnared me yet,
 Though on my head a price is set;
 A good round sum, for so the King
 My head doth value highly.
 Although we are in trade the same,
 We differ but in heart and name,
 The poor he robs, the rich I wing—
 Such game is mine entirely.
 By law an outlaw termed, etc.

A noble lord was asked for toll,
 Who in fine equipage did roll,
 With daughter fair as summer skies—
 I kissed her hand politely.
 O ! tiny hand, O ! cruel theft.
 Of much this outlaw she bereft;
 Though untold wealth lay in her eyes,
 She stole my heart completely.
 Into a palmer turned,
 For love this outlaw yearned—
 Her heart I'll win,
 And count no sin
 To worship at her shrine,
 And dare to call her mine. (*Exit.*)

Enter JACQUES, IVON *and* VILLAGERS.

NO. 3a SCENE—CHORUS AND LOUIS'
 ENTRANCE.

MEN. Ninette has taken heart—

WOMEN. Cheerily, cheerily.

MEN. She will perform her part—

WOMEN. Merrily, merrily.

Enter NINETTE.

ALL. Fast the fun and rare the jokes,
 Rich the food for best of folks;
 old the wine, let mirth prevail,
 She will wear the bridal veil. (*Dance.*)

(*Dance is interrupted by LOUIS heard singing off. As he enters he laughs heartily.*)

LOUIS (*bowing*). Oh, pardon me !
I disturb your merry-making.

NINETTE (*going to him*). Oh, pardon me !
Why are you with laughter shaking ?

LOUIS. Fair maid, 'tis but reflected smile
From your blue eye.

JACQUES (*brusquely*). Such liberties desist from taking !
(JACQUES *has cup of wine in R. hand, L. of LOUIS.*)

LOUIS. I will, fat host, but now, meanwhile,
I am so dry— (*Takes cup.*)
I'll quaff this draught-- (*Drinks.*)
Ah, thanks, my thirst for slaking.

(*Hands cup to JACQUES. General laugh. JACQUES vexed, but soon joins in laugh with others.*)

LOUIS (*ceremoniously*). Continue your festivity !
(*To NINETTE.*)
Oh ! pretty maid.

IVON. She booked for domesticity.

LOUIS. Oh ! foolish maid.
She has my profound sympathy.
(NINETTE *begins to cry.*)

CHORUS (*threateningly*). What !

IVON (*testily*). Oh ! dash it all—
Look here, don't you discourage her,
Or we shall lose
The feast—the dance, the whole affair.

JACQUES. Who might you be ?

LOUIS. I might be the Shah of Persia, (*All bow.*)
Or the Czar of mighty Russia, (*Business.*)
Or the Emperor of China— (*Business.*)
For all you people know,
I might be the heir-apparent
On a diplomatic mission,
Having gained papa's permission
To travel incognito.

No. 3b—SONG AND CHORUS—LOUIS.

Oh ! my specification
 I herewith unfold,
 On the list you will find virtue's many.
 The personification
 Of morals of gold ;
 When most people are born without any.
 My head is all brain, on top you will find
 Intellectual bumps without number ;
 You never could guess the size of my mind ;
 Phrenologically, I'm a wonder.

CHORUS { I'm not such a bad sort of fellow,
 (repeats). { Though I've a peculiar way ;
 { Tho' sun shine or tempest may bellow,
 { You will find me the same every day.

When I first set my foot on earth
 No smile from fortune I received ;
 The fates indulged in dubious mirth ;
 Since then the lot I have deceived.
 I should have been a monarch true,
 To rule o'er subjects just as you ;

But accidents of birth will hap',
 And crown a more unworthy chap.
 I'm really not bad ;
 Though sin is my fad,
 My intentions are excellent, very.
 When fortune is bare
 I never despair—
 Oh ! I shake up the word and make merry.

In the stirring times as these, my friends,
 Learn how to thrust and parry.
 'Tis joy to pierce
 A foeman fierce,
 A rapier always carry.
 To love and lie, to fight and die.
 A soldier ever in the van—
 Such arts I take
 Will surely make
 A sixteenth century gentleman.
 Oh ! I'm not such a bad sort of fellow, etc.

(*Exeunt all but LOUIS.*)

LOUIS. "I might be the Shah of Persia." If I had one satisfying meal I would feel the mental and physical superior of every potentate who ever knew the dubious luxury of a throne.

Enter NINETTE. LOUIS *does not see her.*

The village lies West, so does the wind, I must avoid its course; the savory odor of cooking is not good for hungry poets. *(Sees NINETTE.)*

Ah! the pretty maid! What is your name?

NINETTE *(courtesying)*. Ninette, my lord.

LOUIS *(aside)*. I ask a name and receive a title. *(Aloud.)* Well, Ninette—

NINETTE *(bus.)*. Yes, my lord—

LOUIS. Why do you say my lord?

NINETTE. You must be a lord, aren't you?

LOUIS. Certainly, if you insist. Call me what you will. I'm one of those extremely obliging individuals; a little supersensitive; touched by sentimentality; modest, equable, upright, with just the amount of profundity to a grain to support a perfect equilibrium. Eccentric, O Lord eccentric, I should say so. All brainy men are eccentric! *(Aside.)*

NINETTE *(bewildered)*. Lord Eccentric! *(Courtesy.)*

LOUIS. Eh? *(Amused.)* Oh, yes! *(Kissing her hand)* Obediently yours.

NINETTE. Oh, my lord, Valentine may see.

LOUIS. Of course he may. I've no intention to blind him.

NINETTE. But he's going to marry me.

LOUIS. Oh, that doesn't matter! Don't be afraid, I'll carve an epic on him— *(Bus)* If he dares to interfere.

NINETTE. Oh, thank you, my lord!

LOUIS. When does he expect the ceremony to be consummated?

NINETTE *(sobbing)*. To-morrow. And—he's been married four times before.

LOUIS. He must be a matro-maniac. Ah ! Ninette, if you but knew how I hunger for—

NINETTE. Hunger !

LOUIS. Did I say hunger ? Oh, yes—hunger for the love of a little maid—and something more substantial besides—
(*Aside.*)

NINETTE (*aside*). He loves me !

LOUIS (*bus.*). One must not starve when conditions look so favorable. A little flattery may insure me a repast.

NO. 4—DUO—NINETTE *and* LOUIS.

LOUIS. It needs no poet, gentle maid,
To eulogize your charms.

NINETTE. The compliments, my lord, you've paid
Fill me with strange alarms.

LOUIS (*aside*). An appetite so keen have I
No strange alarms can fill—
(*To NINETTE.*)

A certain something in your eye
In me gives hope a thrill.

BOTH. (Nay) do not think (I) flatter,
(I) (you)
To make a good impression;
Or deal in gilded chatter,
To gain (your) heart's possession.
(my)

NINETTE. I cannot give the love you crave,
For Valentine I wed.

LOUIS (*aside*). Oh ! I shall fill an early grave
If I'm not shortly fed.
(*To NINETTE.*)

Your lovely cheeks are like the rose
When kissed by morning dew—
Give that I ask—in me repose
(*Aside.*)

A dinner—roast or stew.

BOTH. (I)
 (He) can't help but rhapsodize
 On (your) lovely Grecian nose,
 (my)
 For (my) ecstasy implies
 (his)
 (You are) perfectly lovely maid
 (I'm a)
 From (your) eyebrows to (your) toes.
 (my)

NINETTE. My heart is palpitating,
 Caused by his bold confession ;
 He is so fascinating
 He's gained my heart's possession.

LOUIS. Her heart is palpitating,
 Caused by my bold confession ;
 She is so fascinating
 I'm sure she'll make concession.

(LOUIS *is about to embrace her when she sees* GEORGE *enter. She slips away from LOUIS and exits.*)

LOUIS (*watching* NINETTE). Confound it, there goes my dinner.

(GEORGE *slaps LOUIS heavily on shoulder. LOUIS draws, turns.*)

GEORGE (*aside, amazed*). Louis !

LOUIS. What the devil—

GEORGE (*composedly*). No, a palmer.

LOUIS. Your garb protects you (*putting rapier up*).
By Heaven, if your sins are as heavy as your fist, there's little hope for your soul.

(GEORGE, *amused, throws hood back.*)

GEORGE. Well you should know, but you treat an old friend coldly.

LOUIS. Friend ? I know your voice as well as—
(*Recognizes him.*) What the deuce are you doing in that get up ? There must be something good going on to attract George Le Grabbe—

GEORGE. Hush ! Don't juggle with my head so carelessly. (*Bus.*) See, the King values it at two hundred louis.

LOUIS. The King flatters you ; yet, as heads go, it is fine and large, and no doubt would be a great acquisition to the royal collection ; but I would rather have the gold.

GEORGE. I wouldn't.

LOUIS. Then, why do you risk losing it ?

GEORGE. I'm in love.

Enter NINETTE. Listens.

LOUIS. Then you've lost it already. Who's the lady ?

GEORGE. Mirabel !

LOUIS. You're explicit. Where is she ?

GEORGE. Ah ! where is she ? Two weeks ago my fellows stopped a coach in which was an old man and his daughter. She was the fairest—

LOUIS. Admitted. No poetry.

GEORGE. One glance was enough. I kissed her hand and let them free.

LOUIS. They got off cheap.

GEORGE. An hour after I missed my heart.

LOUIS. Ha ! ha ! the robber robbed—and now ?

GEORGE. And now I mean to find her.

LOUIS. Which way ?

GEORGE. To the Court. I overheard a postilion say their journey ended there.

LOUIS. And you would thrust your head into the lion's jaws ?

GEORGE. What is my head to me—

LOUIS. A bagatelle !

GEORGE. Less if I do not find her. Will you come with me ?

LOUIS. If I do, and you should be recognized, I claim the reward for your head.

GEORGE. Eh ? *(NINETTE on wall behind tree.)*

LOUIS. Well, you seem determined to find this maid where nearly all your victims gambol. You'll be recog-

nized as George le Grabbe for a certainty. Then why should I not benefit by the money? I can swear I enticed you there for capture.

GEORGE. Oh, you can swear to anything.

LOUIS. Will you accept the conditions stated?

GEORGE. He forgets I have shaven my beard and moustache off (*aside*). I will.

(NINETTE, to save herself from falling, grabs branch. Nuts fall. LOUIS and GEORGE look up, puzzled.)

NINETTE remains hidden behind tree.)

LOUIS. Oh, have you any plan?

GEORGE. None!

LOUIS. Let's have some drink.

GEORGE. Remember, my head is worth something to me, too—let your plan be a safe one.

Enter JACQUES.

JACQUES (*bowing, to LOUIS*). Yes, my lord.

GEORGE (*aside*). My lord!

LOUIS. Oh, bring some wine!

JACQUES. Very good, my lord. (*Exit.*)

GEORGE. What does that fellow mean by my lording you?

LOUIS. By St. Denis, fortune smiles upon our purpose. Evidently he takes me for a noble.

GEORGE. Simple fool!

LOUIS. Not a bit. Why shouldn't I be a noble?—some foreign prince, and you my traveling companion—my physician—traveling for my health—incognito, the very thing. You can swear to anything, too. Let's do it big while we're about it. Why waste such a personality as this on a pettifogging lording?

GEORGE. True!

LOUIS. Some tall lying will be necessary.

GEORGE. You'll be equal to any emergency.

LOUIS. Well! I'll be prince—prince who? Eh?

GEORGE. Ananias!

LOUIS. Ananias! Where have I heard that name before?

GEORGE. Oh, it's a good old name. Not as common as it should be, but it fits you like a glove.

Enter JACQUES with wine.

Well, Prince, here's the drink!

JACQUES (*amazed, aside*). Prince!

GEORGE (*for JACQUES' benefit*). Your Highness—
(*Laughing.*)

JACQUES (*aside*). Highness!

LOUIS. A repast. A large repast, good host.

JACQUES (*completely done*). Yes, your prince, highness, lord, prince.
(*Bucks off bowing and all confusion.*)

LOUIS (*to GEORGE*). Come, your arm. (*Business.*)
(*Exeunt. NINETTE jumps off wall to stage.*)

NINETTE. Not a lord! What shall I do? Going to the King's Court, and leaves me to marry Valentine. No! He loves me, and will not leave me to such a fate.
(*Exit.*)

Enter IVON, followed by some of MALE CHORUS.

NO. 5a—SCENE: CHORUS, *entrance of* LA FONTAINE,
EUGENE *and* PLAYERS.

IVON. La Fontaine! La Fontaine!
La Fontaine is coming!

CHORUS. La Fontaine! La Fontaine!
Hark the drum! Here they come!
All delight play to-night.

TUTTL. Oh! the jolly actor
Is the only factor
For creating tears and mirth;
Joy is scarce upon the earth—
Make us roar with laughter;
Care cannot come after!

Enter PLAYERS.

Hey ! the jolly fellow,
Oh ! his fun is mellow.
Here he comes, with sunny smile,
He will make us laugh the while.

Enter LA FONTAINE on an ass, EUGENE leading it.

Hey ! the merry fellow—
Hurrah ! Hurrah !

LA FON. (*on ass*). Ladies and Gentlemen : This jovial reception has caused every emotion in me to tingle with unadulterated pleasure. Although I have been enthusiastically received in all the principal one-night stands throughout this glorious country, I must confess I have never been so moved before ! (*Whoa !*) On behalf of my invaluable support— (*Whoa !*) I thank you heartily. If possible I wish to rise higher— (*Bus.*) Pardon the interruption of my fractious support. (*Bus.*) See that he is well cared for. No interviews. As for myself—

No. 5b—SONG AND CHORUS—LA FONTAINE.

An author manager am I
Of a company artistic ;
Some say the apple of my eye
Is the ultra-realistic !
I try to humor every class,
For which the press say I'm an ass—

PLAYERS. To which we all agree !

LA FON. The compliment I oft' return,
In language hot enough to burn ;
But phoenix-like they seem to be
Whenever a play's produced by me.
If I did not to plays give birth
There'd be no critics on the earth—

PLAYERS. Or actors such as we !

REFRAIN.

I am the most original
Of authors termed dramatical,
CHORUS My brain is large and whimsical—
Oh ! it's acting all the time.

(*2d time*). Some say I'm aboriginal
In everything dogmatical,
In me there's nothing flimsical—
I'm distinctly superfine.

LA FON. I've heard of managers who pay
To playwrights sums gigantic,
Five hundred louis for one play,
From across the broad Atlantic.
I'd write a score for such a price,
Why, such a sum would just suffice—

PLAYERS. To pay us salary !

LA FON. Now, here am I, a playwright great,
Whom classes high appreciate,
Yet I've to please both great and small
Or my receipts soon take a fall—
The critics spoil my audience ;
I cuss the press in self-defense—

PLAYERS. Yes, in soliloquy !

REFRAIN.

CHORUS Oh, pastoral or comical,
A play that's methodistical ;
A study, psychological,
(*2d time*). On a woman with a past.
Historical or tragical ;
A farce that's pessimistical ;
A drama philosophical ;
Or a plaster for a cast !

JACQUES. Well, La Fontaine !

LA FON. Ah, my prime old hogshead, you grow more
like a butt every day.

JACQUES. A butt for your mirth !

LA FON. True. Your casque, ever in bloom, reminds
me of a summer day— (*Bus.*)

EUGENE. The warmth of which is strong enough to
drive a cold away !

JACQUES. Well, well, I'm sorry you're not going to
play here.

LA FON. So am I.

JACQUES. But you'll stay over night ?

EUGENE. We might as well.

JACQUES. I ain't got much room. His Highness Prince Ananias is staying here.

EUGENE. Does the Prince occupy all the rooms ?

JACQUES. N-no, but rooms are high where a prince is a guest.

LA FON. Then I'll take a couple in the garret. (*Turning to PLAYERS.*) Ladies and Gentlemen: I am deeply grieved to state that there are only two rooms vacant. Idalia will occupy one, I the other— (*Bus.*)

JACQUES (*aside to LA FONTAINE*). There's the barn.

LA FON. Thanks ! (*To PLAYERS.*) You will find choice accommodation in the barn. (*Bus. PLAYERS.*)

PLAYERS. What ?

LA FON. (*bus.*). Now, now, restrain your pent up joy !

EUGENE. Where do I recline ?

LA FON. Can't you imagine you're Adonis on a bed of roses ?

EUGENE. In there on a truss of straw ?

LA FON. Yes ! You have a wonderful imagination. All you have to do is to lie down.

EUGENE. Then ?

LA FON. Then, if you can't imagine you're on roses, dream you're on down.

EUGENE. Remember, La Fontaine, it was a straw that broke the camel's back. If I don't get a room I'll commence to drink.

LA FON. (*aside*). He has no money. (*Aloud.*) Drink away !

EUGENE. Come on, boys ! I've got last night's receipts.

Exeunt MALE PLAYERS *with* EUGENE *in inn, followed by* JACQUES. LA FONTAINE *wild.*

LA FON. Another fond hope shattered. Put not your trust in treasurers.

Enter NINETTE.

NINETTE (*aside*). La Fontaine! He goes to the fêtes. (LA FONTAINE *turns*.) Oh, Mons. La Fontaine, I want to go on the stage.

LA FON. The stage is a luxury. We generally walk.

NINETTE. Take me with you. I long to be an actress.

LA FON. You're too short to be an actress long.

NINETTE. Ah, but my desire is great!

LA FON. Y-e-s! It's like the measles—all young people are sooner or later affected.

NINETTE. Oh, do take me! There is nothing left for me to do.

LA FON. (*aside*). Eh? What's that? Ha! This interests me. (*To NINETTE*.) Some little domestic difference, eh? Married early, I presume; turned wild; turned hubby's love to hate; turned crazy; turned out; divorced; no alimony—stage, eh?

NINETTE. I do not understand.

LA FON. What? Do you mean to have the audacity to dream of entering this profession without being the central figure of a well advertised scandal?

NINETTE. I don't know what you mean, but I have the divine spark here. (*Striking her chest.*)

LA FON. Bad place to keep it.

NINETTE. I have genius.

LA FON. Too expensive for me.

NINETTE. Let me recite?

LA FON. Don't you dare!

NINETTE. Let me sing?

LA FON. I bar singing.

NINETTE. I can dance!

LA FON. (*aside*). Dance! (*Aloud.*) How high can you kick?

NINETTE (*bus.*). Like that.

LA FON. Like that. No. Could you kick my hat?

NINETTE. What, off the ground ?

LA FON. No ! Off my head ! (*Drops handkerchief.*)

NINETTE. I'll try. (*Bus.*)

LA FON. Wait a moment.

(*Picks handkerchief up. NINETTE kicks hat off when he stoops.*)

NINETTE. Ha ! ha ! ha ! (*LA FONTAINE bus.*)

LA FON. (*aside*). She has the most important qualification—gall. (*LA FONTAINE bus.*)

Enter WOMEN PLAYERS.

Ladies, stand by !

NO. 6—SCENE AND CHORUS — NINETTE and LA FONTAINE.

LA FON. My clever mummers—
Pardon theatric' cant—
Here's an aspirant
Of eighteen summers.
She seeks a place upon the stage;
Her attributes I now will gauge.

CHORUS. A highly honored miss you are,
For he is so particular.

LA FON. When a maid applies for a part
In a company such as mine,
And has no particular line,
I always consider my art.
There are qualifications,
Without modifications,
A maid must possess
To be an actress
In a company such as mine.
To assist graduation divorces go far ;
In an examination all plain maids I bar;
For my approbation young beauties I take,
For my great reputation and art and art's sake.

REFRAIN.

Applicants for the stage
Make me fret, fume and rage,
But I'll be most gallant,
Though unpaid.

All for art, please witness
 How myself I distress,
 Just to find some talent
 In this maid.

LA FON. Now let me hear your vocal voice !
 (NINETTE *sings arpeggio.*)

Now let me see your neatest steps !
 (NINETTE *dances.*)

Recite to me a tragic scene,
 To show your versatility !

NINETTE (*burlesque*). From out his quivering clay
 She drew the gore smeared knife,
 She turned—(*bus.*) there stood the man !
 With hoary pate blood stained,
 "What ! not dead yet ?" she ran—(*bus.*)
 Tears on his bosom rained. (*Bus.*)

(LA FONTAINE *grotesquely illustrates effect of realism.*)

LA FON. I see your particular bent,
 But genius I never use.
 As you've made application—
 For your edification—
 To be an actress,
 First gain from the press
 Judicious advertisement !

ALL. He is the most original, etc., etc., (*Exeunt.*)

Enter IDALIA.

NO. 7—SONG—IDALIA.

Far o'er the mountains, that cleave the blue skies,
 Lies the fair Hamlet of Fancy ;
 There dwell the maidens with flashing black eyes ;
 Charming, with grace and piquancy—
 Oh, long are their joys,
 For time never cloy
 In the fair Hamlet of Fancy.
 Hark ! the music from the zithers falling—
 List' ! the lovers for the dance are calling ;
 Soft melodious rhythms sweet ;
 See bewitching flashing feet
 In delicious caprice hearts enthralling.

The perfume laden zephyrs flow
 O'er verdant vales, when purple glow
 Of languid twilight falling ;
 There life is rich with music bright,
 And love is one supreme delight
 Of golden echoes calling.

Hark ! the swains' seductive pipes are blowing ;
 Great the frolic, brisk the cadence flowing—
 Oh ! the laughter ripples bright—
 Hearts and voices ever light ;
 Look, the face of every maid is glowing !

Come, all ye weary who sigh for bright skies,
 Over the mountains to Fancy ;
 There dwell the maidens with flashing black eyes ;
 Charming, with grace and piquancy—
 Oh ! joys are sublime,
 And life is divine,
 In the fair Hamlet of Fancy.

Enter LOUIS. Stands in porch watching IDALIA.

LOUIS. Surely, this must be the Hamlet of Fancy,
 and I am kneeling to Fancy's queen.

IDALIA. Nay, I am but Idalia, La Fontaine's leading
 lady. I often bear the crowns of divers kingdoms on
 my brow, but my sway is ephemeral, for dethroned am I
 when falls the curtain on the play.

LOUIS. Ah, may no curtain ever hide thee from my
 sight.

IDALIA. Then you must become one of us.

LOUIS. Become an actor ?

IDALIA. Oh, they're not as bad as that.

LOUIS. I've had no experience.

IDALIA. That's not necessary nowadays. At present
 we are without a leading man.

LOUIS. Really ?

IDALIA. But, alas ! I'm afraid you would not fit the
 costumes worn by Pierre.

LOUIS. Is that necessary ?

IDALIA. Absolutely. He was short and fat.

• LOUIS. A well fed hero, eh ?

IDALIA. Yes ; and watered, too.

LOUIS. What accomplishments are essential for a hero ?

IDALIA. To know how "to make" love. Do you know how ?

LOUIS. If that is all I'll be a great actor.

IDALIA. And, let me see—

LOUIS. With pleasure (*takes her hand*). Although my eyes have just beheld you, on my heart your image fair is pressed. If I were lover in the play I'd take thee in my arms and breathe delighting vows into your willing ear (*embracing her*), and kiss your sweet inviting lips. (*Kisses her.*)

IDALIA. You embrace the realistic ?

LOUIS. I prefer it.

IDALIA. I'm sorry you'll not fit the costumes.

LOUIS. So am I. Do you think I can make an impression ?

IDALIA. You can—a deep impression. Delicious mock sentiment. (*Aside.*)

LOUIS. But, put acting aside.

IDALIA. Then I'd lay myself aside, for I act to live.

LOUIS. Your whole soul is not absorbed, then, in your art ?

IDALIA. Do you take me for an amateur ?

LOUIS. Nay, but I would take you for my own sweet love.

Enter LA FONTAINE and EUGENE.

LA FON. Ahem ! What is this ?

IDALIA. A rehearsal.

EUGENE. Doing the hero, with a heavy man ?

IDALIA. Yes ! La Fontaine, I can recommend this gentleman.

LA FON. Indeed ! From which school of acting did you graduate ?

LOUIS. Nature's academy.

EUGENE. Just as bad as the others !

LOUIS (*aside*). I must break my contract with George. I have a head of my own to lose.

LA FON. Well, young man, I may be able to place you—

LOUIS (*to IDALIA*). Pardon me, I wish to see my physician. (*Exit.*)

LA FON. His "phys" what?

IDALIA (*bewildered*). I think he said physician.

EUGENE. Who is he?

IDALIA. I really don't know.

LA FON. (*to IDALIA*). Be careful. Remember our contract. No more nuptials for five years. You've tried to make three matrimonial hits.

EUGENE. Which turned out noble failures.

IDALIA. Do not fear, I'll keep my vow to the letter.

LA FON. Never to marry another title.

EUGENE. And, besides, to abstain from all forms of matrimony for five years.

LA FON. That's the contract. Keep it.

IDALIA. Just watch me for the next five years.

(*Exit.*)

EUGENE. La Fontaine, keep your eye on her.

LA FON. Oh, she's not such a fool as you think. What ! marry again, after the three aristocratic impositions she has dispensed with ? Oh, no ! I've posted her divorce papers over the holes in the corner of the tent, which she uses for her dressing room, to keep the wind out. They keep her thinking, too. (*Exeunt.*)

Enter LOUIS:

LOUIS. I have an idea. I'll take La Fontaine and his company with me to Court. He has several hundred louis, so I hear. I need his purse.

Enter GEORGE.

• GEORGE. Louis, come, let's be off. An old player, La Fontaine by name, is here with his company. He knew me well some years ago. Come !

LOUIS. Wait ! I need a retinue. His company will serve. I'll promise to present him to the King. He'll jump at that, for it's his ambition to perform at Court. A little flattery and the promise will also open wide his purse, the use of which I badly need.

Enter LA FONTAINE.

Watch me land my fish.

LA FON. (*aside*). Eugene has set in for a wet week.

GEORGE (*aside to LOUIS*). He's not in a humor for your proposition.

Enter JACQUES.

(*To JACQUES.*) Well ?

JACQUES. Does his Highness intend to stay over night ?

GEORGE. No ! (*Bus. JACQUES and LA FONTAINE.*)

LA FON. (*aside to JACQUES*). His Highness ?

JACQUES (*aside to LA FONTAINE*). Yes, his Highness Prince Ananias, my guest. (*Exit.*)

LA FON. (*aside*). Oh, Moses ! and I've been punching his noble shoulder with undue familiarity.

GEORGE. Come, let us go !

LOUIS. Wait. He's at the bait.

LA FON. (*aside*). I'll apologize. (*Bus.*)

LOUIS (*aside*). He nibbles.

LA FON. I beg your Highness' pardon for being so familiar.

LOUIS. Don't apologize, my good man. If I choose to travel incognito I must take the consequences. I'm very glad to meet one of your fame. How would you like to accompany me to the Court and be presented to His Majesty ?

LA FON. How would I like it ? Oh, your Highness !
(*Bus.*)

LOUIS. Your company might give a performance.

LA FON. (*aside*). I must be dreaming!

LOUIS). I'll take you with me. (LA FONTAINE *bus.*)

LA FON. (*to GEORGE*). Would you mind punching me in the back? (*Bus.*) Thanks!

Enter JACQUES.

JACQUES. The bill, your Highness? (*Bus.*)

LOUIS (*aside to GEORGE*). No! (*Aloud.*) Oh, a— (*Bus.*) What! have I been foolish enough to leave my purse behind? There (*to GEORGE*), that is your fault. You would insist on a foot journey in advance of the retinue. Never ask me to precede my suite again. You know I never think of money, and yet you suggest this expedition and permit me to travel incognito without a purse.

GEORGE (*aside*). Well, I'll be excommunicated!

LA FON. Oh, your Highness, if I may—if you would only honor me—that is, I have plenty of ready money—

LOUIS. Oh, my good man, I couldn't think of such a thing.

LA FON. Oh, but your Highness, pray permit me.

LOUIS. Well, if you will insist (*aside to GEORGE*). He's landed!

LA FON. Your Highness o'erwhelms me. (*To JACQUES.*) Give me the bill. (*Bus.*)

LOUIS (*to GEORGE*). We have no time to lose, if I am to be present at the Court on his Majesty's natal day. (*Exit JACQUES. To LA FONTAINE.*) When can you set out with me?

LA FON. Now, your Highness (*runs to inn porch*). Eugene! Eugene! (*Bus.*) Hey! Hey! Everybody!

Enter EUGENE and PLAYERS.

EUGENE. What is it?

LA FON. A patron—My life's desire is gained at last. We play before the King. (*To LOUIS*). Your Highness, permit me to present my company.

LOUIS. I am pleased to meet your celebrated players. I take a great interest in the drama, and wish to wipe

out all the shams and mockeries that choke its glorious future.

ALL. Hurrah !

LOUIS. Therefore I give my patronage to you, La Fontaine, for I believe that you will eventually elevate the stage to the standard set by my noble ancestor Sophocles. Sophocles was the first child phenomenon. I was a child phenomenon, too.

No. 9—DUO AND CHORUS—LOUIS *and* GEORGE.

LOUIS. When I was born I weighed ten stone—

GEORGE. 'Tis true, I held the scale.

LOUIS. So large was I in head and bone—

GEORGE. These facts none dare assail.

LOUIS. All languages I spoke with ease,
And by the roots I pulled up trees ;
My brain was of gigantic size—
Moses to me was far from wise ;
This is no fairy tale.

CHORUS. Oh, fiction can't surpass the truth—
Phenomenal, prodigious youth !

GEORGE. One equaled him—
He's dead and gone.
What ! two ? Absurd !
Oh, no, just one.
Rely on him implicitly,
He detects prevarication,
There never breathed a prodigy
Like the wonder of our nation.

CHORUS. One equaled him, etc.

LOUIS. When I was ten years to a day—

GEORGE. Ten years you were, dear Prince.

LOUIS. Then I sat down to write a play—

GEORGE. You wrote it inch by inch.

LOUIS. The plot was new, the characters
As true as life, that never errs ;
With virtue filled was every act,
It's running yet, it is a fact—
A managerial cinch.

Exeunt PLAYERS, LA FONTAINE *and* EUGENE.

GEORGE. Confound it, Louis! You can get along without a retinue. Never mind La Fontaine.

LOUIS. Don't fret yourself unnecessarily. I may be able to exist without a retinue, but I cannot "get along" very far without La Fontaine's purse. Don't be alarmed.

GEORGE. Alarmed! You would be alarmed if your head was in such a position as mine. I don't want to lose it before I find Mirabel.

LOUIS. I hope not, for I've set my heart on the reward for it.

GEORGE. Are you in earnest?

LOUIS. Earnest? Do you think I'm doing all this for recreation? Oh, no! If you're recognized when we get to Court, which I doubt not, I intend to claim the two hundred louis. His Majesty offers the sum, and where else would one deliver such a prize but at the place where spot cash would be paid? This is a business arrangement.

GEORGE. Louis!

LOUIS. Of course, I shall do nothing to aid detection, but I will assert my claim and right as soon as I see you have no possible chance of escape.

GEORGE. Phew! But, look here, put yourself in my place.

LOUIS. Really, you ask too much. I've only one head.

GEORGE. So have I.

LOUIS. Ah, but compare them. Bah! there's no comparison—you do not understand.

GEORGE. I'll understand my head as long as I live.

LOUIS. I hope you will. Poor old George, totally ignorant of the commercial world.

Enter IDALIA.

An outlaw's life is so limited and confined. (*Turns. To IDALIA*). My Queen of Fancy, where have you been?

IDALIA. Through yonder wood.

LOUIS. It must be enchanted now.

IDALIA. You are irresistible.

LOUIS. I am your most devoted subject.

IDALIA. Truce ! Did La Fontaine take you ?

LOUIS. No ! (*aside*). I take him !

IDALIA. It is strange you have no desire to be an actor.

LOUIS. Yes, it is. I would rather be what I am.

IDALIA. A poet ?

LOUIS. No, your lover.

IDALIA. Beware ! I am an actress, an unknown quantity. I may be older than I seem.

LOUIS. Time could be no Vandal to you.

IDALIA. I may be a widow.

LOUIS. You have not spent your life in a nunnery (*Bus*). Idalia, I love you.

IDALIA. How can I tell you are sincere ? (*Bus*.)

LOUIS. My darling !

IDALIA. I hope so.

LOUIS. Take me, queen, to your palace in Fancy's fair land.

No. 10—DUO—IDALIA *and* LOUIS.

IDALIA. I am no queen, no sway hold I,
No palace waits for me—
The verdant fields, the sun, the sky—
And love, if love needs be.

LOUIS. Say not, fair queen, if love needs be,
For thee alone I live ;
Ah, answer if thine heart is free,
The prize of life to give !

IDALIA. I feel the rosy glow of love
Steal o'er me, charm sublime ;
Ah, all my yielding soul is love—
Oh, ecstasy divine.

LOUIS. The sweet sensations of the morn
Shall gather at thy shrine,
A thousand fragrant flow'rs adorn—
Dear love, the joys be thine.

IDALIA. In glory breaks the rosy dawn ;
Oh, sun forever shine—
With fairest blooms of radiant morn—
Dear love, forever thine.

LOUIS. In glory break, oh, rosy dawn,
And blow soft wind divine ;
The fairest blooms of smiling morn
For thee, dear love of mine.

(Exeunt IDALIA and LOUIS.)

Enter NINETTE. She watches them off.

NINETTE. She loves him. What shall I do ? I cannot stay here.

Enter EUGENE.

Oh, Monsieur, do take me with you !

EUGENE. I would like to, immensely, but I can't. Ask La Fontaine.

NINETTE. I did.

EUGENE. Well ?

NINETTE. He asked me if I had been through the divorce court.

EUGENE. Have you ?

NINETTE. No, but I could do so if necessary.

EUGENE. Are you married ?

NINETTE. Oh, no, but I was to marry Valentine to-morrow.

EUGENE. Do so. Get a divorce and follow us.

NINETTE. How will I get it.

EUGENE *(aside)*. She's a novelty. The greatest I ever met. *(Bus.)* An idea. One on the old man. *(To NINETTE.)* Did you ever wear tights ?

NINETTE. I really don't know. Have they anything to do with a divorce ?

EUGENE. Frequently! (*Aside.*) I'll make a juvenile of her. We need one. La Fontaine will never know the difference—the short-sighted old fool. (*To NINETTE.*) I'll take you if you'll don a man's costume. Then I can pass you off for an actor.

NINETTE. Dress as you are?

EUGENE. Just as I am.

NINETTE. Oh, I couldn't do that.

EUGENE. Now, don't be prudish. I'll find the togs. Come on. Hurry up, for we leave soon. (*Exit.*)

NINETTE (*following, hesitates*). No, I'll not go! Nor shall he, with her! I'll frustrate his plot and wreck his love! I'll be revenged. (*Exit.*)

Enter PLAYERS, LA FONTAINE *and* GEORGE.

NO. 11—FINALE.

ACTORS. Farewell, provincial towns, farewell!
 No more you'll see
 This company;
 The weary one night stand as well—
 Will never more
 Cry out encore!
 With his auspicious patronage,
 We wend our way
 To pastures gay;
 Upon dramatic pilgrimage—
 We're going to play
 For better pay!

Enter NINETTE.

NINETTE. Stay and list' to me!

CHORUS. We can't refuse a maid so pretty.

NINETTE (*bus*). I am so weak, I cannot speak—
 Love is brittle! oh, so brittle—
 It is sad.
 I feel so blue, this day I'll rue;
 Just a little—oh so little,
 I'll go mad! (*Staggering*).
 My heart is breaking—
 I'm also quaking—
 My bones are shaking—
 My head is aching.

ALL (*but NINETTE*). Ah ! yes, we know, it's often so—
 Just a little, oh, so little,
 Makes one sad.
 For maid like you, to imbibe, too,
 Is a little—just a little—
 Bit too bad !

NINETTE (*rect*). Ah ! I forget—oh ! let me think.

LA FON. (*to GEORGE*). What did she say ?

GEORGE. I'm sure she said she'd take to drink.

LA FON. May be she has upon her head
 A heavy load of sin.

GEORGE. That all her woe is caused by love
 I think is rather thin.

LA FON. Perhaps she's overslept herself
 And had a wild nightmare !

GEORGE. She's just the kind of tiny elf
 To suffer from a tare (*tear*).

ALL (*but NINETTE*). Now go in for reformation ;
 And you'll gain our approbation,
 For it's sad to see a maiden
 Drown her sorrows and her woes,
 You can see our consternation—
 You deserve our condemnation ;
 We are sorry, little maiden—
 Note a tear slide down each nose !

Enter LOUIS. Joins GEORGE.

NINETTE (*rect*). Your innuendo I refute—
 Your base suspicion I dispute—
 Just ope your ears while I unfold
 A plot most wicked, weird and bold !

LA FON. A plot most wicked, weird and bold,
 If new, is worth its weight in gold.

GEORGE (*aside*). I think she overheard our plan !

LOUIS (*aside*). Our plan behind the tree ?

GEORGE (*aside*). Yes, you must queer her, if you can.

LOUIS (*aside*). Just take your cue from me !

LOUIS (*to ALL*). My friend, the doctor, will survey
 The maiden's brain, cost free ;
 His diagnosis will explain
 Away this mystery.

GEORGE. In the left corner of her eye
 I note a murderous gleam ;
 To such a specialist as I
 It's worse than it doth seem.
 Now my advice take all of you—
 Her case is really bad ;
 It's best to take a bird's-eye view
 Of women when they're mad !

ALL. Oh, good gracious, Ninette is mad !

ENSEMBLE.

NINETTE. I am not mad !
 It's just too bad—
 If I'm not mad
 I will go mad !

OTHERS. Ninette is mad !
 How very sad—
 Oh, it's too bad,
 She's raving mad !

LA FON. I thrill with joy that's intense, (*hiccough*)
 I beam a smile that's immense— (*hiccough*)
 A bliss most ecstatic,
 Runs like a chromatic,
 And muddles and fuddles my sense !
 There's not another like me, (*hiccough*)
 I gloat and gurgle with glee— (*hiccough*)
 To your mem'ry tack it ;
 The truth most emphatic,
 The latest and greatest you see !

Enter DUKE D'ANGERS, ATTENDANTS *and some*
 VILLAGERS.

DUKE (*rect.*). Good day to you, provincials !

LOUIS (*rect.*). From where did this peacock stray ?

DUKE (*rect.*). I demand some entertainment !

GEORGE. Confound the peacock, don't obey !

DUKE. I'm a peer of France,
 Well known to fame,
 I'm only here by chance,
 My horse is lame !

GEORGE (*to LOUIS*). I know this peer quite well,
 His purse I drew
 Not many weeks ago—
 Make this our cue!

LOUIS (*to DUKE*). I regret we cannot show to
 You the courtesy that's due you!

DUKE. Never have I been so treated,
 This reception's rather chill,
 Why am I not warmly greeted?
 I am generally feasted—
 What a bitter, bitter pill!

LOUIS (*to DUKE*). Who are you who bids us stay?

DUKE. Know, I am the Duke D'Angers!

NINETTE (*aside*). I'll peach on them! I'll have my say.
 Oh! list' to me, great Duke D'Angers.
 With pleading voice he whispered love,
 And craved from me my heart;
 I gave because I thought the move
 A good one on my part.
 He seemed to me of noble blood—
 So being rather free,
 I took the risk, I thought it good,
 A noble's wife to 'be.
 I overheard a dreadful plot,
 I stood behind that tree—
 I heard—what froze me to the spot—
 I heard—oh, misery!
 The foolish maid—try if you can
 To reckon what it cost her;
 She gave not to a noble man,
 But to a rank impostor.

ALL. What impostor?

LA FON. What! he's not Prince Ananias?

DUKE. Prince Ananias!

NINETTE. No, not he!

LA FON. Oh, misery, my fondest hope
 Curls upward in a cloud of smoke.

DUKE. His name has a fictitious sound,
 He's an impostor run to ground—
 Disarm them both, let them be bound.

GEORGE. Stand back ! Who dares defy us ?
Here is Prince Ananias !

Enter IDALIA.

IDALIA. What, you are Prince Ananias ?
O fickle fate ! O wretched vow !
Ah ! he's a prince—
Thoughtless vow that by oath I am bound to,
Now makes me wince,
Dearest heart, for I never dare wed you.
Ah ! love of mine,
I have sworn to wed never a title ;
Wretched vow
Thus to part, we who love, heart of mine !

NINETTE (*aside*). Now, if that is the case,
I'll retract with good grace,
And try by might and main
To keep them twain !
Soon his love will grow dim
As she cannot wed him—
Only prince he in name
Will remain.

IDALIA. Ah ! love of mine,
May this dream of my life last
forever,
Wretched vows
Shall not part, we who love,
heart of mine !

LOUIS (*aside to GEORGE*). If I tell the truth
I will win a bride.

GEORGE. That it 's worth your while
Can't by me be denied.

LOUIS. Then I break my vow
To accompany you.

GEORGE. That I'm sure you will
Never do !

ENSEMBLE.

Is he a prince ?
Undenied goes the charge of the maiden ;
He did not wince,
For with dignity he's heavy laden.

All our fond hopes
 Rest upon him as La Fontaine's patron ;—
 Hateful charge
 Impostor ; prince refute and deny.

LOUIS. The accusation I deny !
 I will not brook, from maid or duke,
 Such calumny as this !
 I deny the charge—I deny !
 Unhappy pair, my power to dare,
 Your shot at me's a miss !

IDALIA (*to LOUIS*). What can the accusation be ?

LA FON. This maiden says—

ALL (*interrupting*). He is no prince !

IDALIA (*to LOUIS*). If so, what happiness for me ?

LOUIS (*to IDALIA*). Now, can't you see ?

GEORGE (*to ALL*). You'll all agree ?

ALL. Oh, yes, we see, we all agree.

EUGÈNE (*to NINETTE*). I have your suit !

DUKE (*aside*). This maid is cute.

ALL. It was a joke she tried to
 play !

IDALIA (*to LOUIS*). I'll wait, dear love.

GEORGE (*to ALL*). Come, let us move !

ALL. Yes, to the palace let's
 away !

DUKE (*to NINETTE*). Now, press your charge !

EUGÈNE (*to NINETTE*). The suit's not large !
 Come, be a man, why this
 delay ?

NINETTE. I've changed my mind, the
 charge was false !
 I now confess I told a lie !

EUGÈNE *rushes off with* NINETTE.

DUKE. 'Tis now the maiden tells the
 lie,
 Impostor he is yet to me !
 (*Draws.*)

A general scuffle takes place, ACTORS against VILLAGERS and DUKE'S Attendants. LA FONTAINE is thrown round carelessly. GEORGE lays about with his staff. LOUIS wounds DUKE, who is taken in inn by Attendants. Laugh as DUKE disappears.)

LOUIS. Who follows to the palace
To appear before the King? (Cheer.)

LA FON. To appear before the King
I have struck the proper thing.
Now for a hit,
No doubt of it,
I'll be royal dramatist.

IDALIA. As you are a prince, my vow
Will not let me marry now;
Of thee I'm sure—
Love will endure,
You'll renounce your name for me.

ENSEMBLE.

We'll stick to him, through thick and thin,
For he is great Prince Ananias!

Enter NINETTE, dressed as boy, with EUGENE. The ass is led on from barn. LA FONTAINE mounts.

PICTURE.

CURTAIN.

PRINCE ANANIAS.

ACT II.

NO. II—OPENING—IDALIA *and* CHORUS.

IDALIA *reclines upon a bank. About the scene in graceful attitudes are* SHEPHERDS *and* SHEPHERDESSES, *who act the story of* IDALIA'S *song.*

IDALIA. Shy Strephon tuned his pipe at morn,
And hastened to the upland lawn
To greet fair Amaryllis.
His doubting heart filled with alarm,
A wreath of flow'rs hung on his arm,
With winsome madrigal to charm
The waiting Amaryllis. (*Dance.*)

"Oh! will he tell his love to me?
That I love him, 'tis plain to see,"
So sighed poor Amaryllis.
When Strephon met the lovely maid,
The verse and wreath he shyly laid,
Near by her feet to pale and fade
Like love-lorn Amaryllis. (*Dance.*)

"Oh, Strephon, have you naught to tell?"
He turned and saw the bosom swell
Of lovely Amaryllis.
The shy youth felt his heart grow bold,
He took her hand, his love he told,
Then in his arms he did enfold
And kiss sweet Amaryllis.

(*Exeunt.* CHORUS. IDALIA *wakes from reverie.*)

IDALIA. A day dream. What does it mean? Love in earnest—that means artistic oblivion. So be it—the public's loss, not mine.

Enter LOUIS.

My royal lover!

LOUIS. Dear one, do not remind me of that estate which is the only obstacle to our immediate happiness.

I am my father's only heir. After I once ascend the throne I will renounce all pomp and power for you.

IDALIA. Is your father very healthy?

LOUIS. Absurdly so. We are celebrated for longevity.

IDALIA. It's most unfortunate that a mere throne obstructs our path.

LOUIS. Ah, break the vow you made in a moment of mental inebriation!

IDALIA. Not mental, dear—matrimonial inebriation. Do not blame me; if you had only known my first husband, the Marquis Roue.

LOUIS. Your first, darling? How many have you?

IDALIA. Only three.

LOUIS. Three, dearest?

IDALIA. Ah, you forget. I was only a poor actress. I had a reputation to make. Besides, managers found frequent marriages inexpensive methods of advertisement. Do not shrink from me. I yearned to elevate the stage. It was ungovernable pride, Louis!

LOUIS. My poor darling. *(Exeunt.)*

Enter DUCHESS and MIRABEL.

DUCHESS. Now, Mirabel, you must be merry and forget about your great fine outlaw. What would your father say if he knew your heart? The Duke will—

MIRABEL. Aunt, please do not remind me of D'Angers.

DUCHESS. Not remind you of your betrothed. Oh, Mirabel. Well, I suppose you are constituted just as I am. I love outlaws, or any romantic men beyond the pale, particularly if they are big men, giants in fact. There's something so substantial about a giant.

MIRABEL. Ah, you should see George—

DUCHESS. I would be delighted too, my dear, but as no one has claimed the reward for his head, he must be hard to find.

Enter LORD CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAM. Hush ! Hush ! How indelicate to indulge in noisy mirth.

DUCHESS. Really, brother, I'm becoming hypochondriacal by this enforced melancholy. The strain on my nerves to suppress a smile is agonizing. Whenever I look at his Majesty's face, I nearly choke with laugh—

(Stifles laugh.)

CHAM. *(bus.)*. Hush ! *(To DUCHESS.)* If you must laugh, laugh in your sleeve.

DUCHESS. Oh ! I'd burst every gown I own. Bah ! One dare not even grin for fear of making his Majesty weep.

CHAM. But as a loyal subject—

DUCHESS. I must be subject to tears ? No ! For thirty years I've been a loyal pump and raised enough eye-water to cure all the short-sighted in Christendom.

CHAM. And I've drawn the amusement fund dry and my own purse as well, in paying for all kinds of humorous entertainments for the purpose of raising a smile on his Majesty's cheerless face.

DUCHESS. You might as well try to tickle Niobe with a feather.

CHAM. Well, if D'Angers does not succeed in importing some side-splitting specialty from London, the game's up. He should have been here a week ago. My only hope is the company his Highness, Prince Ananias, has brought. All who have a keen appreciation of the ludicrous will find onions of superior strength ready peeled at the royal larder. Such will prove efficacious in drawing copious tears.

ALL. Onions !

CHAM. Yes, onions. They are the only preventive of smiles I know of. Hide them in your mouchoirs and don't forget to use them when you feel inclined to grin in his Majesty's presence.

(Exeunt.)

Enter EUGENE.

EUGENE. Well, La Fontaine seems to be in trouble. Idalia has given up her part, and Ninette is cast for Goliath. Other members of the company are too busy paying attention to the ladies of the Court to rehearse. Love

will be the death of La Fontaine's play. Thank heaven I'm out of reach.

SONG.

EUGENE. Come, Venus and Hebe,
Adorn my bark and float with me.
Euterpe, thy lute bring,
And bid the sirens to me sing.
With Bacchus for good cheer,
And Momus the craft to steer.
Take Cupid? Nay, nay, boy!
A shaft of thine would wreck my joy.
Ah! Cupid, meddlesome boy—good-bye!
My heart you'll never annoy—don't try!
I sail with pleasure's chosen throng,—
Hail! mirth and beauty, wine and song.

EUGENE. I wonder where Ninette is. Perhaps a little love would be exciting.

Enter LA FONTAINE.

LA FON. Eugene, my boy, will you oblige me?

EUGENE. No, I will not. When you pay my salary I will—

LA FON. My dear boy, I fully intend to pay you, but at present I'm bankrupt. When the Prince's retinue arrives—

EUGENE. Retinue! You're a fool. You have given all your money to him, and he's doing you. I've heard of him before somewhere. I'll swear there's a scandal connected with the name of Ananias.

LA FON. Tut—tut, ungrateful boy, think of all I've done for you. Haven't I produced all your plays?

EUGENE. Yes, with your name ascribed as the author.

LA FON. Of course. You're unknown. My name draws.

EUGENE. Well, see how it will draw under a play from your own pen. You advertise yourself as the greatest author-manager on earth.

LA FON. That's business. What would become of art if we were all honest?

EUGENE. Ask your actors. Here they come!

Enter PLAYERS.

LA FON. (*testily to PLAYERS*). Well, what is the matter?

FIRST PLAYER (*Tenor*). You've cast me for a heavy part.

EUGENE. For one of voice so light, that is gross injustice.

LA FON. This is a nice time to find fault. Half an hour before the curtain rises.

SECOND PLAYER (*Bass*). There seems to be something missing in my part.

OTHERS. And in mine.

LA FON. Yes, I think there's something missing, too.

NO. 14—DUO AND MALE CHORUS—EUGENE *and*
LA FONTAINE.

LA FON. I thought it very easy to sit down and write
a play,
The sitting down was simple that I practiced every day.
I wrote a book of chatter, and forgot about a plot;
The sweetheart with the villain somehow tied up in a
knot.
To reach the situation I have thought out in my mind,
I'd need another evening, or a week, in which to find
A child that has been missing, something else is missing
too,
Of what it is I'm thinking, but I cannot guess, can you?

EUGENE. Now let me see! Now let me think!

PLAYERS. Perhaps, it is a minor detail of the plot.

EUGENE. Now let me see! Now let me think!

PLAYERS. Perhaps, the risque situation you forgot.

EUGENE. Now I guess for what you clamor,
But for it you'd search in vain.

ALL (*but LA FONTAINE*). You sat down to write a
drama
When your head was minus brain.

LA FON. To be a famous playwright of the money-making kind,
You need not be aesthetic or artistic'ly inclined,
Just gather pens and paper, and some dramas write of yore,
The best are those forgotten and by critics read no more.
Then take some situations, and a character or two ;
Then find a manager who will produce them well for you—
Don't use your own ideas, if you've any I should say,
Rely upon the actors, and they'll make of them a play.

EUGENE. Now let me see ! Now let me think !

PLAYERS. Your information really teaches us a lot.

EUGENE. Now let me see ! Now let me think !

PLAYERS. Indeed, you seem to know their failings to a dot.

EUGENE. But, for plays the public clamor,
And the playwright's out for gain.

ALL. Yet, for gold he sells his drama
Though his head is minus brain.

Exeunt EUGENE and PLAYERS.

LA FON. Since I have tried to write a play, luck's been dead against me. O nerve, nerve, great substitute for brain, desert me not.

Enter NINETTE.

My juvenile. Young man, my life depends on you to-day. The part you play calls for a giant. As you are not a giant, I've billed you as the boy phenomenon.

NINETTE. Boy phenomenon ?

LA FON. Yes, and if you succeed in getting through the play alive you will have earned the right to the title, Gag occasionally, but let not your gags be too subtle.

NINETTE. What is a gag ?

LA FON. You an actor and know not what a gag is ?

NINETTE. I do not know.

LA FON. Another fond hope shattered. (*Exit.*)

NINETTE. Alas ! I fear I'll never make an actress.
O, the technique !

Enter LOUIS and IDALIA. NINETTE up stage.

IDALIA. And your father is not even the least bit apoplectic ?

LOUIS. Not a bit, dear. My mother had all the brains.

IDALIA. Which her son inherited.

LOUIS. And you, my love, control.

IDALIA. My life. *(Embrace.)*

NINETTE. You are not alone !

(LOUIS unmoved recognizes NINETTE.)

LOUIS *(aside)*. Ninette ! *(Embrace again.)*

NINETTE *(bus.)*. Your Highness !

LOUIS *(embracing)*. Begone, presumptuous page !

NINETTE *(aside)*. Page ! He cannot read me.

IDALIA. He is not a page. He is the young man Eugene picked up to play the parts I recommended you for.

(Both have moved to R. C., embrace as GEORGE enters.)

GEORGE. Hullo ! Turtle doves are flocking, or am I in a rookery ?

(Scene fills with couples, actors with Court ladies and vice versa.)

LOUIS. La Fontaine's company will demoralize the Court.

IDALIA. Nay, 'twill be the other way about.

LOUIS. Of course. It's usually so.

Enter EUGENE.

IDALIA *(to GEORGE)*. You must wear a love-proof cuirass !

GEORGE. I ? No ! Love will eat through any metal.

IDALIA. Yes, it frequently consumes large quantities. But love, unalloyed love, who can tell of its joys ?

GEORGE and NINETTE *(despondently)*. Joys !

IDALIA. You, my poet-lover !

LOUIS. Erato before Pindar.

NO. 15—NINETTE, IDALIA, EUGENE, LOUIS, GEORGE
and CHORUS.

IDALIA, EUGENE *and* LOUIS.

Ah ! list to me,
I sing of love,
My love for thee.
Which I shall prove,
To live forever.

CHORUS. Ah ! love's a joy
Of bliss divine,
Whose sweet employ
Is to combine
Two hearts forever,
With chain of gold
He binds them fast,
Love ne'er grows old,
Though passion's past,
Joy lives forever.

NINETTE. Ah ! woe is me,
I mourn the love
I craved from thee,
The moments prove
If I lost forever.

GEORGE. Love is no joy,
No bliss divine,
It would annoy
Such heart as thine
With care forever.
No chain of gold
Can bind thee fast ;
Be as of old,
No passions last,
Or joys, forever.

(*Exeunt* IDALIA, NINETTE, EUGENE, GEORGE *and others*
severally. Manet LOUIS.)

LOUIS. I've nothing to fear from Ninette. She loves
me. If George would meet his Mirabel, or be detected,

I could then pay the fee of presentation to the Lord Chamberlain. (*Enter LORD CHAMBERLAIN.*) Here comes the persistent fool. Ah! Has my retinue arrived?

CHAM. No, Your Highness.

LOUIS. Thanks! (*Going.*)

CHAM. 'Oh, I—a—beg Your Highness' pardon, but have you forgotten the little present you promised if I would present you to His Majesty?

LOUIS. Oh, the two hundred louis. The bribe.

CHAM. Not a bribe, Your Highness. A small token of regard.

LOUIS. Just as you wish. You shall have the— (*Bus.*)

CHAM. Small token of regard—

LOUIS. When my retinue arrives. I must hold him off till George is nabbed. (*Aside.*)

Enter LA FONTAINE.

Ah! Here is La Fontaine.

CHAM. Monsieur, I hope you find our little theatre adaptable. We have not had a performance there for years. What is the subject of your play?

Enter GEORGE.

LA FON. Oh—a—a—why it's—rather complicated.

CHAM. How is the dialogue?

LA FON. I never write dialogue. Epigram!

CHAM. Risque?

LA FON. Rather!

LOUIS. Up to date. (*To GEORGE.*) Isn't it?

GEORGE. I should say so.

CHAM. Comical?

LA FON. (*to LOUIS and GEORGE.*) Awfully comical! Well!!

(*General laugh. CHAMBERLAIN suddenly sad. Bus.*)

CHAM. That's very unfortunate. The man who wrote the last comedy for His Majesty was thrown into a dungeon, where he is tortured with boiling ink and red hot pens every evening at eight and on matinees at two. (LA FONTAINE *faints*.) I'm sorry your play is a comedy.

LOUIS. Comedy? Not a bit of it. It's a farce.

CHAM. Farce?

LOUIS. What, did His Majesty never see one?

CHAM. Never!

GEORGE. Then we have him sure. (*To LA FONTAINE*.) Pull yourself together.

LOUIS (*to LA FONTAINE*). Cheer up, old man, while there's life there's hope.

LA FON. Can't this be postponed?

GEORGE. No, put some specialties in it. Won't take a minute.

LOUIS. Make a farce of it! Fake it.

CHAM. Well, I'm glad it's not a comedy for Mons. La Fontaine's sake! But isn't farce something new?

LOUIS. Many think so, but after diligent research I'm convinced farce is as old as the hills.

NO. 16 — LORD CHAMBERLAIN, LA FONTAINE *and*
GEORGE.

LOUIS. Now Herodotus omits
In his history to state
That varieties were quite the thing in Athens;
But I'll bet some Grecian wits
Wrote some farces up to date,
That would cause a smile amongst the mirthless Latins;
No doubt Pindar wrote, at times,
Tropical, and other rhymes,
Which were set to music by Timotheus after;
At which Socrates would smile
With Euripides a while,
And the critics Aristarchi roar with laughter.

ALL. Now my sober friends beware,
 Even cats are killed with care,
 So a mirth-provoking entertainment choose.
 Funny tragedies are sparse,
 Just take in a dose of farce,
 For there's nothing like a laugh to cure the blues.
(Dance.)

GEORGE. When a comedy's produced,
 And it doesn't make a hit—
 For some comedies are very often dreary—
 Specialties are introduced
 To enliven it a bit,—
 For the public likes a drama that is cheery,—
 Just to put in a song or two,
 And a dance that's risque do—
 Now the serpentine draws like a porous plaster;
 In this manner they repair,
 So, friend author, don't despair,
 If your failure should be threatened with disaster.

ALL. Now, my sober friends, beware, etc., etc.

(*Exeunt LA FONTAINE and LORD CHAMBERLAIN.*)

GEORGE. Louis, she is here. I've found her father.

LOUIS. I congratulate you heartily. Business is brightening.
(Aside.)

GEORGE. I'll follow him, perhaps he'll lead me to her.

LOUIS. Who will?

GEORGE. The Lord Chamberlain.

LOUIS. Is he her father?

GEORGE. Yes, he is the man who was with her when my eyes beheld her first.

LOUIS. Then follow him by all means.

GEORGE. I will. At last, dear Mirabel, I've found you at last.

(*Exit. LOUIS laughs heartily. Watches GEORGE off.*)

LOUIS. This is quite a family affair. George follows her father, then I follow George, for he must lose his head before I gain my end.
(Exit.)

Enter LA FONTAINE with manuscript.

LA FON. I can see a dire, damp, dismal dungeon yawning for me. Oh! why was I not satisfied with the small but certain profits of the provinces?

Enter EUGENE.

Ah! Eugene, I'm in sore need of an original brain.

EUGENE. As usual.

LA FON. The last man who wrote a comedy for this King was thrown into a dungeon, where he is tortured every eve at eight and on matinees at two. Eugene, think of it.

EUGENE. No doubt, he deserves all he gets.

LA FON. But, my boy, have some pity.

EUGENE. For him?

LA FON. No! For me!

EUGENE. You! Why, there's not the slightest chance of you sharing his fate.

LA FON. I wouldn't gamble on it.

EUGENE. Bah! You're far too modest. They'll take anything from your pen.

LA FON. Oh! Oh!! Oh!!! Kick me, I deserve it. Go on. Illuminate the ghastly prospect of my doom.

EUGENE. Your doom?

LA FON. Can't you understand? This is a comedy.
(*Bus.*)

Listen!

EUGENE (*bus.*). Not a line. I'll take your word for it.

LA FON. Eugene! for mercy's sake, take up your brilliant pen and make a farce of it.

EUGENE. A what of it?

LA FON. A farce. You know.

EUGENE. Never heard of such a thing in my life.

LA FON. Another fond hope shattered. Prepare my obituary.

EUGENE. That won't take a second. (*Exit.*)

LA FON (*to MSS.*). Oh, if I only had a match. It's fire you need. It would be an anti-climax to tear you up. I'll leave you to the critics.

(*Enter IDALIA.*)

IDALIA. Why do you rage? What is wrong?

LA FON. Everything is wrong. Eugene's left me in the lurch.

IDALIA. You owe him money?

LA FON. Bah! You have broken your contract. You refuse to go on. Why?

IDALIA. Because the part is so inane. If you will experiment you must take the consequences. I think you wrote the play without assistance.

LA FON. Is that your only reason?

IDALIA. Yes.

LA FON. I doubt it. Since the appearance in our midst of the Prince, rumor has been busy, and already your high-priced name is linked with his. Is such for the purpose of advertisement, or is it your intention to make this your final farewell tour, after ten years of mighty profitable farewells?

IDALIA. I've been seriously thinking of—

LA FON. Ah! Do not say you are going to try the matrimonial dodge for the fourth time.

IDALIA. Well, what if I do? It would not affect my career.

LA FON. Beware! A titled artiste only draws now, after a large and highly-spiced sensation. The scheme is played out. Half the aristocracy are tied to stars who cannot earn enough to pay their husbands' club dues. Take my advice, there's nothing in it.

IDALIA. Isn't there? My heart is in it this time.

LA FON. Another fond hope shattered! Farewell, Idalia! No more applauding throngs will strain to catch a glimpse of your dainty ankle, henceforth to be confined to the limits of a boudoir and the gaze of a conventional and blaze husband. Farewell! (*Exit.*)

IDALIA. Nay, nay, La Fontaine, you have reaped your last harvest. I have had enough of art. None

shall say I lingered on too long. I'll make an exit now
in the hey-day of my fame. *(Exit.)*

Enter NINETTE.

NINETTE. If I am to succeed as an actress, I must
tear this love for him from my heart. What chance have
I, a rustic maiden, to win him from such a rival as Idalia?
She has all in her favor—she's tall, she's graceful, she's
beautiful, and she's a widow. Why am I not a widow?
That is the charm that is lacking me—widow! *(Enter*
COURT LADIES.) Ah, here's a dozen, and all stage-
struck.

NO. 17—NINETTE *and* CHORUS OF COURT LADIES.

CHORUS. Titled widows all are we,
Each a brand new divorcee—
Nothing for us but the stage, high the wage, all the rage.
There our woes we can assuage, also cage, youth and sage,
Matrimonial altercations,
Make theatric constellations—
Rouge and powder for the faded,
Wigs and padding for the jaded—
Rustic maids new beauties make—why not we?

NINETTE. The fair rustic maiden
Needs naught on her lips,
No chalk or rouge laid on,
She suffers no quips,
For Nature, kind mother,
Adorned her fair child,
The graces
On her, too, have smiled.

SOPRANO. I would like to star.

CONTRALTO. Tragedy, for me.

SOPRANO. Comedy I bar.

CONTRALTO. I soubrette would be.

ALL. Have we any chance?

CHORUS. All successful stars we see,
Have been widows frequently,
Many more than once or twice, sev'ral thrice—oh! how
nice.
Advantageous the device, to entice higher price

Managers secure attraction,
 Gives financial satisfaction—
 In felicity's creation,
 Queen becomes of gay sensation ;—
 But a step from Court to stage—law
 to art.

NINETTE. The charm of a widow
 No one can deny.
 Ah ! many are smitten
 By her knowing eye ;
 The fair rustic maiden
 Has no chance with her—
 She rivals
 All others in wear !

(*Exeunt COURT LADIES.*)

NINETTE. And to think they are favored and I am not.

Enter LOUIS.

LOUIS. Confound it, I'm tired dodging that Lord Chamberlain. If George is not detected soon, I'll be tempted to unmask him. (*Turns.*) Ninette ! (*Aside.*)

NINETTE. Well, Prince, you are as far from the reward you covet for George Le Grabbe's head as you were several days ago.

LOUIS. Reward ! George Le Grabbe ! Who is George Le Grabbe ?

NINETTE. We know !

LOUIS. Never heard of him in my life,

NINETTE. What !!! Why, I overheard you plot at the village inn just before you met La Fontaine.

LOUIS. Dreams, boy ! Dreams ! I am no prophet.

NINETTE. Dreams ? Did I dream that you met a maiden named Ninette ?

LOUIS. Ninette ! A pretty name. Never heard it before !

NINETTE. Oh, you wretch ! You love Idalia.

LOUIS. Ha, ha ! The winds due west. So your tender heart is rankled by jealousy ? In me you see a hated rival, eh ? (*Bus.*) Grow a beard, boy ! (*Bus.*)

A most unpromising chin. Grow a beard! (NINETTE *bus.*) Hullo! What's this? (*Bus.*) Ah, she's fainting! (*Aside.*)

Enter GEORGE.

GEORGE. Louis, I will find her.

(LOUIS *passes* NINETTE to GEORGE.)

LOUIS. Excellent news.

Enter CHAMBERLAIN.

GEORGE (NINETTE *in his arms*). My darling!

CHAM. (*aside to* LOUIS). Your Highness, may I remind you again of that trifle?

LOUIS. Did you inform His Majesty of my presence and desire? (*To* GEORGE.) Don't drop him!

Enter LA FONTAINE.

CHAM. His Majesty will be here to receive you very shortly.

GEORGE (*aside to* LOUIS). Who is it?

LOUIS (*to* LA FON.). Has my retinue arrived?

LA FON. and CHAM. No!

LOUIS (*aside to* GEORGE). It's Ninette!

GEORGE (*aside*). The deuce! She'll betray me!

LA FON. (*to* LOUIS). Your Highness, can't you postpone?

GEORGE (*aside to* LOUIS). What shall I do with her?

Enter EUGENE.

LOUIS (*aside to* GEORGE). She knows all. Take her away!

GEORGE. Where to? (EUGENE *recognizes* NINETTE.)

EUGENE. Jerusalem!

GEORGE. Too far.

(*Drops* NINETTE *in* EUGENE'S arms.)

LA FON. (*eagerly*). Let me go!

CHAM. (*detaining* LA FON.). You! The King is ready to see your farce.

LA FON. Sorry, can't go. (*Aside.*) I'm doomed.

LOUIS (*to* GEORGE, *pointing at* NINETTE). Will you take that boy away?

LA FON. (*notices* NINETTE). Oh! The last straw! The heavy parts crushed the boy phenomenon.

EUGENE. Oh, no, he has only fainted, I'll bring him to. (*Kisses* NINETTE.)

NINETTE (*savagely*). Look out, Prince! My next blow will be a squall. (*Exit.*)

EUGENE (*aside*). Confound her.

LA FON. (*bus.*). The third time I've struck the tormentor. It means torture for me sure.

NO. 18—EUGENE, CHAMBERLAIN, LA FONTAINE,
LOUIS *and* GEORGE.

ALL. A strange remark—
The day is dark,
When skies are blue and clear;
A gloomy heart
I have to cart—
I am its funeral bier.

EUGENE. My face must show
That right hand blow—
I'm feeling very queer.

LA FONTAINE. My actors play
No farce to-day,
Nor drama, so I fear.

CHAM. If he will pay the cash to-day,
I'll be of better cheer.

LOUIS. To end this croon,
I hope that soon,
His daughter will appear.

GEORGE. My only hope
Is two—a rope
Or Mirabel, the dear.

ALL. We mope and grope
To cope with hope—
Oh, pluck elope with fear!

A bit of luck may turn the scale,
 If not my laugh will be a wail ;
 To blubber ere I reach the tail,
 Would prove a spouting duck.
 Within an hour I'll merry be,
 If circumstances favor me—
 I hope and pray accordingly,
 For just a bit of luck.

(*Exeunt* EUGENE. GEORGE *follows* CHAMBERLAIN. LA FONTAINE *sits on throne*. LOUIS *down stage*.)

LOUIS (*aside*). I must raise two hundred louis. Where? (*Sees* LA FONTAINE.) I wonder if I've left any cash in his purse!

LA FON. (*aside*). I would I were the King—

LOUIS (*to* LA FONTAINE). Ah! La Fontaine, soon the whole Court will be at your feet.

LA FON. Yes, the audience is usually before the "foots," but it depends on the play whether the author's feet are seen or not.

LOUIS. None could fail to see yours.

LA FON. Another omen. Turning up my toes.

LOUIS. The inconvenience caused by my dilatory retinue is very annoying.

LA FON. Very, Your Highness. To me. (*Aside*.)

LOUIS. As I am a little short, could you—

LA FON. I'm sorry to say you've taken every sou I possessed.

LOUIS. I will repay you tenfold—when my retinue arrives.

LA FON. I must bring matters to a crisis! The Lord Chamberlain is becoming a bore. Ninette is dangerous.

Enter GEORGE.

Have you found Mirabel? (*LA FONTAINE behind tree*.)

GEORGE. No.

LOUIS. Of course not. She's a myth, and if I don't raise some cash shortly, you will be a corpse. While you're attached to your skull, there's absolutely no chance of obtaining any ready money.

GEORGE. What's my head got to do with your debts ?

LOUIS. Everything. To get you here to find your Mirabel I had to promise a bribe of two hundred louis to the impecunious Lord Chamberlain. The exact Court value of your pate. Now, how am I to fulfill my contract with him if I don't receive the reward for your head ? It seems to me I've interested myself in a coward who hides his head under a bushel.

GEORGE. Coward !

LOUIS. Yes. You, an outlaw. Bah ! You're as strongly attached to your head as an oyster to its shell.

GEORGE (*brightly*). But, my boy, you forget that I've shaved my face.

LOUIS (*amazed*). You've swindled me ?

GEORGE (*indignantly*). No, my face was clean when we made the bargain.

LOUIS. Dishonest rogue, you took advantage of me.

GEORGE. Now, Louis, won't some one else's head do ? I'm known more by reputation than by personal appearance.

LOUIS. No ! Your head is indisputable evidence, I want cash on delivery.

GEORGE. Ah ! an excellent substitute. Let's use old La Fontaine.

LA FON. Ow !!!

(*Tries to escape. GEORGE captures him.*)

GEORGE. Shut up ! They'll hang us all !

LA FON. Not all. Count me out. My constitution is too far run down to be suddenly run up on the end of a rope. Besides, a playwright's neck is too tough to sever.

LOUIS. George, the case is dead against you.

(*Flourish off.*)

GEORGE (*looking off*). It's the King approaching.

LOUIS. To receive me.

GEORGE. The whole Court is coming this way. (To LA FON.) To see your farce !

LA FON. Out of the valley of death into the chamber of torture.

LOUIS. The Lord Chamberlain must present me now.

GEORGE. Then let him go to the deuce for his bribe, say I.

LOUIS. Say I!

LA FON. Say I!!! *(Exeunt arm in arm.)*

Enter LADIES and GENTS of Court, ATTENDANTS, PAGES, GUARDS, LORD CHAMBERLAIN, DUCHESS and KING. March.

NO. 19a—CHORUS AND SONG—KING.

CHORUS. All hail our smileless King!
 Dejected monarch sad—
 To whom all woe doth cling,
 A laugh he never had.
 Give praise in minor key,
 Rejoice in mournful lay,
 His merry subjects we,
 Make glad, his grave birthday.

NO. 19b—SONG—KING.

A regal sadness sits on me;
 Also a sombre gloom,
 I'm wrapped in deepest misery
 Far blacker than the tomb.
 The reason why all this should be
 I cannot solve alone;
 My mind's so dark I cannot see—
 Now melancholy, you'll agree,
 Has marked me for her own.
 This melancholy is no sham,
 Nor eccentricity;
 Since birth I've been a leaking dam,
 A weeping mystery.
 I hear all funny jokes brand new;
 I read each hum'rous tale;
 I see the comic papers, too;
 But all of no avail.
 To titter just one giggle grin,

Or smirk once in a while ;—
 I'd give a rich and lofty place
 To him who'd decorate my face
 With one expansive smile.
 This melancholy is no sham, etc., etc.

(KING *ascends throne, business ; laugh—smothered—*
 CHAMBERLAIN *bus.*)

CHAM. (*aside to COURTIER'S*). Use the onions ! Use the onions !

KING. Who let me in to this practical joke ?

CHAM. Your Majesty. I'm wholly at a loss to explain.

KING (*sniffing*). Am I enthroned on a bed of a highly odoriferous vegetable, or does my olfactory nerve deceive me ?

CHAM. Onions ! Your Majesty always has a pleasant sense of imagination.

KING. True, true. My faithful subjects, I thank you for this cordial reception from the depths of my sad heart. May fortune smile upon you all—for I cannot (*weeps*) when I look upon your happy faces—(*weeps*). Did I say happy ?

CHAM. (*aside, to COURTIER'S*). Use the onions ! Use the onions !

KING. Tears, tears ! I am cursed with a briny spring that all the droughts of summer can't dry up. Ah me ! Am I to be entertained to-day ?

CHAM. Your Majesty, His Royal Highness, Prince Ananias, attended by his famous physician, Harry Stottle, originator of the water cure—

KING. Did you say a plumber ?

CHAM. No, Your Majesty, a physician.

KING. Ah ! No use for me. Go on.

CHAM. The Prince also desires to present his royal father's band of players—

KING. String or brass band players ?

CHAM. The band is composed of actors, Your Majesty.

KING. Ah! They play on boards. Did I crack a joke?

CHAM. (*bus.*). Use the onions!

KING. Present the Prince! (*Bus. Flourish.*)

Enter LOUIS, GEORGE and LA FONTAINE.

LA FON. (*to* HERALD). I'll blow you off after the show.

LOUIS (*bus. Aside to* GEORGE). Isn't there a familiar odor of—

GEORGE (*bus. Aside to* LOUIS). Yes.

LA FON. (*bus. Aside*). My Heavens! Who's cooking steak and—

GEORGE (*aside to* LA FONTAINE). Do you sniff the savory bulbous root!

LA FON. Bilious root? To me it smells damn like onions.

KING. Who said onions?

CHAM. (*bus.*). His Royal Highness, Prince Ananias, heir apparent, Duke of Cavi, Earl of Prevarication, Baron Shuffle, Abbe Grau— (*Presenting* GEORGE.) Harry Stottle, Frs., M. D., D. D., D. CL., L.L. D. (LA FONTAINE, *bus.*) La Fontaine!

LA FON. (*to* CHAMBERLAIN). Is that all? Um!! P. D. Q. (*Bus. To* GEORGE.) Is my comedy to be played before that face?

GEORGE. Yes.

LA FON. Farewell!

LOUIS. Your Majesty. Your renown as a great and just monarch alone exceeds your fame for wit and humor. Therefore my royal father tenders you a token of his enthusiastic regard and prays you will accept his company of comedians, together with his famous dramatist, La Fontaine, who has prepared for Your Majesty's entertainment an original farce, full of fun from first to finish.

KING. Farce! A novelty—good! (LA FONTAINE (*bus.*). Is all in readiness?

CHAM. Yes, Your Majesty! The keepers are preparing the instruments in the torture chamber.

(LA FONTAINE *bus.*)

KING. Then let me see the farce. I'm in excellent humor to-day and would be well amused.

(Exeunt all but LOUIS and GEORGE. March.)

LOUIS. Aren't you going to see the farce?

GEORGE. Not, if I retain my head!

LOUIS. Sorry you can't attend as a deadhead.

GEORGE. Thanks! *(Exit.)*

Enter NINETTE.

NINETTE. It's no use. I cannot tear him from my heart, and yet I cannot hold my own without my skirts.

Enter EUGENE.

Eugene, I want the clothes I wore before you persuaded me to be an actor.

EUGENE. Your skirts? I sold them to one of the girls.

NINETTE. Is she wearing them?

EUGENE. I don't know.

NINETTE. You must find some for me.

EUGENE. I'll have to steal them from the dressing-tent while the girls are on the stage. But aren't you going to play? You're on early in the act.

NINETTE. Can't help that. Some one else must play that part, for I'm going to do my original role. To do so I need skirts.

EUGENE. But, if you don't go to the dressing-tent, where will you make the change?

NINETTE. In there. I'll drop the hangings while you watch—outside. Go! Make haste! Every one is seeing the play. *(Exit EUGENE)* I am convinced he's known me from the first. Grow a beard! He knew this was no masculine chin.

Enter IDALIA.

IDALIA. The curtain's up. You'll miss your cue.

NINETTE. The boy-phenomenon's debut is indefinitely postponed.

IDALIA. That's lucky for the audience (*aside*). Why?

NINETTE. Indisposition! Anything you like. Say for the same reason you do not play.

Enter LOUIS.

IDALIA (*bus.*). My dear—girl.

NINETTE (*bus.*). Yes, I am a girl. Oh, Idalia, be as generous as you are beautiful. You can never wed him without breaking your vow. Leave him to me!

(LOUIS *about to exit*. EUGENE *enters*.)

IDALIA (*bus.*). Must my perfect happiness be marred by a soubrette? No! (*Aside*.)

NINETTE. He will love me again when I put my skirts on.

IDALIA. Will he? (EUGENE *exit*.)

NINETTE. He loved me before he saw you.

IDALIA. Did he?

NINETTE. Then you came and charmed him from me.

IDALIA. Of course. She's playing on me. (*Aside*.)

NINETTE. You have the world at your feet, and thousands to choose from.

IDALIA. It's a pity you have centered your love on him. However, I'll be as generous as I am beautiful. You may take all the others.

NINETTE. No, I'll take him! (*Exit LOUIS*.) What you think is love is absurd infatuation. I'll be avenged. I'll don my skirts. (*Exit*.)

IDALIA. Infatuation? No, it cannot be! It is love. His verses say so.

NO. 20—SONG—IDALIA.

A ray of golden sunlight fell
 Across my life when you passed by,
 I felt my heart with rapture swell—
 A glance—'twas all, and love came nigh;
 And love came nigh and fluttered round,
 All through the hours till spring made bright,—
 The earth with myriad flowers was crowned
 For thee, my love, my heart's delight.

In beauteous garb was nature clad,
 When heart to heart we pledged our troth ;
 The birds with joyous song made glad,
 And clearest heaven smiled on both.
 For love is spring and ne'er grows old,
 When once the light shines clear and bright ;
 What though the earth is crowned with gold ?
 Love flowers for thee, my heart's delight. *(Exit.)*

Enter EUGENE.

EUGENE. Gone? I can't run about with this bundle.
 Some ingenue will be decidedly deshabelle.

Enter NINETTE.

NINETTE. Oh! My skirts! Drop the hangings!
(Bus. EUGENE.) Never again will I forsake you. Hurry,
 hurry, Eugene! *(Bus.)* What's wrong?

EUGENE. The hangings are nailed. I cannot get
 them down.

NINETTE. What's to be done? *(Bus.)* Your cloak.
 Pin it across! *(Bus.)*

EUGENE *(bus.)*. Will it take you long?

NINETTE. Not a minute.

EUGENE. Get in!

NINETTE. That's too high!

EUGENE *(bus.)*. How is that?

(NINETTE behind cloak.)

NINETTE *(looking over)*. You'll have to keep your
 back turned.

EUGENE. I can't look both ways with my back turned
 to you.

NINETTE. You must try. Anyone in sight?

EUGENE. All serene. *(Noise heard.)* Hurry up, some
 one's coming!

NINETTE. Mercy! Who is it?

EUGENE. The King and Court.

NINETTE. Gracious! And I'm using the throne for a
 boudoir.

EUGENE. Hurry up !

NINETTE. All over !

EUGENE. This way !

(Exeunt as the KING, CHAMBERLAIN, DUCHESS LA FONTAINE in chains guarded enter. March. KING takes throne. LA FONTAINE personification of misery.)

KING (*bus.*). What is the name of the play ?

LA FON. Mud !

CHAM. (*aside*). A good name. Plot and humor totally obscured.

KING. The name of the author ?

LA FON. Denis !

Enter LOUIS.

LOUIS. Hullo ! First act over ?

LA FON. No, not half. The action is interrupted for a specialty.

LOUIS. What, here ?

CHAM. No, not here. His acrobatic turn may be witnessed this evening at eight in the torture chamber.

LOUIS. I understand. His play was a fizzle.

ALL. Right !

LA FON. Thanks.

LOUIS. He's doomed to the same fate the other poor devil suffers.

ALL. Right !

LA FON. (*bus.*). Metropolitan critics are delightful palliatives compared to a Court audience.

Enter EUGENE.

EUGENE. What, performance over ?

LA FON. Not all. To be continued at eight in the torture—

EUGENE. Chamber ? The devil—

LA FON. That's what I'll get.

LOUIS. Your Majesty, it seems to me you did not endure the opening agonies of epigramme long enough to get at the point of the farce. La Fontaine's wit should be taken with a grain of salt.

KING. Why was I not served with salt ?

LOUIS. Attic salt.

CHAM. We are all out of attic salt, Your Majesty.

LOUIS. So it seems. Now, Your Majesty, my father like your august self was born without a humorous. A King without a funny bone finds it difficult to smile, yet this same La Fontaine wrote a play that caused my father's face to take on a smile of such magnitude, that his proboscis ever since has worn a blush of rarest rosy hue.

KING. Produce the play.

LOUIS. Unfortunately the manuscript was stolen—like all good things, but I can give you an account of the first night's performance, which, no doubt, Your Majesty will find particularly interesting.

No. 21—SONG AND CHORUS—LOUIS.

My royal dad had reached the age of forty years and five,
When his physician did engage, to keep his King alive,
La Fontaine here to write a play, so farcical in plot,
By which to thaw his face some day as other mirth would
not.
So, bit by bit the farce was writ, the King and Court went
out,
The first act sent each maid and gent into a hearty
shout.

But, my dad !

KING. Did he smile ?

LOUIS. Did he smile ?

ALL. Well, rather !

LOUIS. The act was half over before his face broke,
A grin seemed to hover just after a joke ;
The actors, brave creatures, assisted to work
Across his sad features a tittering smirk.
From him to win
A grin so thin
And coy was joy—

The feeble titter
 Soon became a snicker ;
 And for it by wit,
 To flit and fit

Around his mouth a smile. Ha ! ha !

The second act went with a roar, the complications
 grew ;

The critics laughed 'til they were sore, as critics seldom
 do,

To keep the audience in the seats the ushers tried in
 vain,

They stamped to see such clever feats and deadheads
 breathed again.

The gods swore, too, the farce was new, the balcony
 came down,

The first night swells chimed in like bells, and talked it
 around the town.

But, my dad !

KING. Did he laugh ?

LOUIS. Did he laugh ?

ALL. Well, rather !

LOUIS. From pen-feathered snickers to herald his
 smiles,

They raised full-fledged titters by well-woven wiles—

Convulsive with laughter he held his fat side,

But burst out soon after and split his face wide.

Mirth's draught he quaffed,
 And laughed 'til daft

The fun had run

So far, he giggled

'Til he reeled and wriggled,

For a fact the act

With jokes was packed,

The King did naught but howl. Ha ! ha !

In Act the third the parts gave way, the foots stood up
 and pranced,

The "orchestra" refused to play and on the bass drum
 danced,

The auditors went into fits, the prompter split his side ;

The actors made artistic hits, the tormentor near died ;

The gridiron yelled, the roars unquelled—the climax
 then to cap,

"Scenes" took to "wings," the other things fell dead
 straight through a trap.

But, my dad !

KING. Did he howl ?

LOUIS. Did he howl ?

ALL. Well, rather !

LOUIS. Grotesque the contortion of smiles on his face,
Hilarious distortion—a change then took place,
His mouth held wide open, to let out a roar,
Stuck in that position, to shut never more.

Hurrah ! Ha ! ha !

Ha ! ha ! Hurrah !

To bring a King
To roaring laughter,
Forty-five years after,
By a play, so gay,
A way, to lay

A large expansive smile. Ha ! ha !

(KING *prostrated*. CHAMBERLAIN *much alarmed business with onion*.)

KING (to CHAM.). Ah ! The mystery's solved, it is you who for thirty years have done every conceivable thing to deprive me of a smile. No wonder every one has failed to raise a laugh in me when you have—you have hoo—hoo—hoo—what's the word ?

LA FON. Hoodooed !

KING. Hoodooed them all, by your pleasant references to the torture chamber. Here, give me that chain. (*Takes chain of office from CHAMBERLAIN ; regals LA FONTAINE. CHAMBERLAIN exits crushed.*) You are a genius ! I'll make you dramatist royal ! (*Enter GEORGE.*) And you, Harry Stottle, henceforth my sole physician. You, too, are a genius ! Where's a chain ? Take this. Oh, that first night. (*Ascends throne.*)

GEORGE (to LOUIS). What's the matter with the King ? He called me a genius.

LOUIS. Don't resent it. He means well.

Enter CHAMBERLAIN.

CHAM. Your Majesty, the Duke d'Angers.

ALL (*excitement*). D'Angers ! (*GEORGE alarmed.*)

GEORGE (to LOUIS). Trapped ! What's to be done ?

LOUIS. Make me your heir.

(*Flourish—enter D'ANGERS.*)

KING. Well, D'Angers, what has London to offer in shape of comic specialties?

D'ANGERS. For glory—nothing. For gold—much.

KING. For glory? Who expects English actors to play for glory?

D'ANGERS. Your Majesty, the gold you gave me to advance was stolen by the notorious George Le Grabbe—

KING. What?

CHAM. George Le Grabbe again? 'Twas he who stopped my coach and kissed my daughter Mirabel for toll.

GEORGE. You lie, old man, I kissed the maid for love.
(*Enter MIRABEL.*) Mirabel! 'Tis I, George Le Grabbe.

(*Consternation.*)

LOUIS. And I claim the reward for his head.

DUKE (*to LOUIS*). Villain! You here, too?

KING. How now?

DUKE. He is the bravo who gave me this wound.

LOUIS (*bus.*). I never saw the limping fool before.

Enter NINETTE.

DUKE. The girl! Who is that man?

NINETTE. He is—

ALL. Who?

NINETTE. Prince Ananias!

DUKE. Yes, Prince of liars, none other. I met them three days ago. I see them all but an old man, the head of a band of strolling players, by name La Fontaine.

(*Bus. LA FONTAINE.*)

KING. Seize them all!

Enter IDALIA.

IDALIA. Louis!

NO. 22—SCENE—PRINCIPALS AND FULL CHORUS.

KING (*rect.*). Impostor Prince, your end is nigh,
Your joke is o'er, prepare to die.

IDALIA. Is love a radiant dream
 Life will awaken ?
 Is joy a sunset-beam
 Day has forsaken ?
 Is all love's sweetness past,
 Mirth turned to sorrow ?
 This hour, dear heart, the last—
 Tears for the morrow ?
 Never ! Ah, never shall our love be blighted !
 Life is cold and dreary
 When thou art not near me.
 Break not the sweet dream, we shall be united.
 Hope's bright star shines for all,
 For thee, dear love, my all.

LOUIS (rect.). To fight for love, for love I lie,
 For love I'll like a gascon die !
 A prince above reproach,
 The last of my historic line,
 Of ancient name,
 Will never deign
 On justice to encroach.
 The charge I can refute,
 By thrusting once this weapon mine,
 Who cares to feel
 This trusty steel
 My title now dispute !

GEORCE (rect.). Hold, brave gascon ! The odds are
 great,
 Though mine's the blame, submit, 'tis fate.

LOUIS (rect.). I'll not submit, the King shall smile
 Again o'er that first night awhile.
 In act the third the parts gave way, etc., etc

KING. Unbind them ! I cannot smile without them.
 Away with precedents ! La Fontaine, I appoint you
 Royal Dramatist.

LA FON. (aside to EUGENE). Collaborateurs, equal
 shares ?

EUGENE. Its a go.

LA FON. My star is enveloped in a matrimonial haze.
 But here another sparkles. Without school, mannerism
 or husband, an innovation, she has never seen a divorce
 court.

LOUIS (*to IDALIA*). And do you positively intend to leave the stage forever?

IDALIA. Yes, my love, now that you are only a Prince in name.

LOUIS. Then we will have little but love to live on.

DUKE (*to MIRABEL*). Mirabel, you do not love me.

GEORGE (*to DUKE*). Can't you take a hint?

CHAM. Surely, Your Majesty will not suffer Le Grabbe to live?

KING. From a bold outlaw to your son-in-law is a metamorphosis love has wrought. I thirst for the humorous. I will thereby have a draught at your expense. But you, Ananias, oh, fitly named Prince, what am I to do for you?

LOUIS. May I suggest a poet-laureateship?

KING. You a poet? I've never heard or read any of your work.

LOUIS. The loss is yours. I will write an ode to celebrate Your Majesty's recovery. I would be happy if I did not owe La Fontaine several hundred louis which I cannot liquidate. I would rather owe the sums of my happiness to you, including two hundred louis I also owe your Lord Chamberlain.

KING. What? Did you really get anything out of him?

LOUIS. No, Your Majesty. It is a token of regard he cannot get out of me for giving me the exceeding pleasure of decorating Your Majesty's face with a healthy smile.

NO. 23—FINALE.

LA FON. One equalled him.

GEORGE. He's dead and gone.

LA FON. What, two? Absurd!

GEORGE. Oh no, just one.

ALL. Rely on him implicitly,
He detests prevarication,
There never breathed a prodigy,
Like the wonder of our nation.

LOUIS and TUTTI. I'm not such a bad sort of fellow,
Though I've a peculiar way,
Tho' sunshine, or tempest may bellow,
You'll find me the same every day.

CURTAIN.







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